

WILLIAM J. MURRAY.

MAY 16, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. GIBSON, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 1334.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1334) granting a pension to William J. Murray, have examined the same and the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill proposes to pension, at the rate of \$12 per month, William J. Murray, of Hot Springs, Ark.

The Senate report states the facts, and is as follows:

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1334) granting a pension to William J. Murray, have examined the same and report:

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate during the Fifty-fourth Congress, passed the Senate, and was reported favorably by the House.

The Senate report was as follows, which your committee adopt, and recommend the passage of the bill:

The claimant under this bill rendered the Government exceedingly valuable services in the telegraph department of the Gulf and in the Red River campaign. He suffered unusual hardships while in the service of the Government, and is now totally blind. The annexed affidavits show all the facts in the case.

Your committee are of opinion that the bill is a meritorious one, and its passage is recommended.

STATE OF ARKANSAS, *County of Garland:*

Wm. J. Murray, being duly sworn, states as follows:

I, William J. Murray, entered U. S. Military Telegraph Department of the Gulf early in September, in the year 1862, under the supervision of Lieut. J. Elnate Smith, and continued in said service a foreman of construction and repairs until said Lieut. J. Elnate Smith was relieved by Capt. Chas. S. Bulkley. I still continued in the service in the same capacity, obeying every order issued to me, regardless of consequences to myself, during Gen. N. P. Banks' Red River campaign in year 1864; and at the vacation at Arandecor myself, with two companions, Richard Scott and Edward Conway, were ordered down the river at a point near the mouth of Cane River where it intersects with the Red River, to report to Commodore (late Admiral) Porter, for the purpose of blowing up the gunboat *Eastport*, which was aground and could not be floated off. Here Commodore Porter detained us three days in the vain effort to float her. In the meantime the army had advanced to Alexander, which

left both banks of the river unguarded, when we were permitted to destroy the *Eastport*, and after performing that service a boat was sent from the gunboat *Fort Himan* to take us on board, but was fired on from the bank directly over us. Several attempts were made to get us that afternoon, with the same result. The banks of the river were so steep at this point the gunboats could not elevate their guns so as to clear the banks. They, however, protected us until dark, when we made a detour up the river, through mud and water, for perhaps half a mile, when we entered the woods. We were bewildered and, must say, badly scared. We became lost. Our suffering was intense, without food or water, as we had to travel, or rather crawl, by night and lay in ambush all day, and pray to the wood ticks. We were in this condition for several days and nights. My hardships were increased by my boots cutting my feet, and the first night's travel succeeding the three or four nights' travel I was compelled to go barefooted, sometimes crawling on my hands and knees, sometimes assisted by my companions, until we reached a point some 6 miles below Cane River, where we were picked up by the gunboat *Fort Himan*, which was ordered by Commodore Porter to remain ten days and nights to abate our coming in. As soon as we were taken on board we proceeded to Alexander. Here I remained during the construction of the dam by Colonel Bailey, unable to bear a sock on my feet or to stand up without support, on account of the dizziness or swimming in my head, and like a hair or smoke before my right eye. After reaching New Orleans I was treated by Dr. C. C. Baird, of that city. He advised me to quit the service; that there was something the matter with my brain, and in time I would lose my mind.

In a few weeks, however, I became accustomed to my deformity. About this time Captain Bulkley was relieved from duty in the department by Captain Fullar. This was, I think, in Sept., 1864. I was again able to resume my duty until October 21st of that year. While extending a line from Fort Morgan to Navy Cove, the depot of supplies for the army operating against Mobile, I was suddenly seized with a dizziness and was unable to stand alone. I was taken to my home at New Orleans and again treated by Dr. Baird. I was therefore forced to quit the service with the sight of my right eye almost gone and the left badly affected. I did not, however, become totally blind until the year 1872. I do not know where to address Captain Bulkley. I was informed, by letter from San Francisco in 1867, that he had sailed for China; since then I have heard nothing of him. Captain Fullar I know very little about, not even knowing his initial, as my service under him was very short. I am sure the gentleman would readily respond to my appeal, and could be found. Dr. Baird, who treated me at the time, is also dead.

I have advertised in the New Orleans Daily Delta for Richard Scott, the one of two companions of the Red River campaign supposed to be living, but I have met with no response.

his
WILLIAM J. MURRAY.
mark

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 27th day of January, 1893.

[SEAL.]

W. A. KIRK, Notary Public.

(My commission expires April 15th, 1896.)

Be it known that I, Stephen Thomas, of Montpelier, Washington County, and State of Vermont, being duly sworn, do affirm and declare that I was commissioned colonel of the 8th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers on the twelfth day of November, A. D. 1861, and was in command of said regiment in the military Department of the Gulf of U. S. Army in 1862 and 1863, and that J. Elliot Smith was quartermaster-sergeant of said 8th Regiment, and that while on duty with the regiment said Smith was promoted to be lieutenant and superintendent of military telegraph lines in Dept. of the Gulf by command of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler, commanding said Department of the Gulf. The said Lieutenant J. Elliot Smith remained in charge of the telegraph lines of said department until after General Butler was relieved from command of said Department of the Gulf.

I furthermore state upon oath that William J. Murry was employed by said Lieutenant J. Elliot Smith as constructor and repairer of telegraph lines in said department, and that said Murry performed his duties in said position with conscientious faithfulness and ability, and to the interest and benefit of the U. S. Government, and that the services so rendered by the said Murry were arduous, important, and of great advantage to the military operations in said Department of the Gulf.

I furthermore state upon oath that I have no interest, directly or indirectly, in the said Murry, or any benefit or advantage he may derive from this affidavit, or any matter or subject it may affect.

I further state that I am eighty-three years old, and a resident of Montpelier, Washington County, Vermont, where I do make and execute this instrument on the third day of January, A. D. 1893.

STEPHEN THOMAS.

Witness: F. E. SMITH.

On this third day of January, A. D. 1893, personally appeared Stephen Thomas, who was colonel of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers in the years 1862 and 1863, and to me personally well known as a person of truth, veracity, and whose statement is entitled to full credit, and who subscribed the above instrument in my presence and made oath to it before me, and he personally swore that he had no interest whatever in William J. Murry, therein referred to.

[SEAL.]

RALPH B. DENNY, *Notary Public*.

I, Fred E. Smith, late quartermaster of the 8th Regiment Vermont Volunteers, had personal knowledge of the efficient and intelligent application of William J. Murray to his duties as constructor of telegraph lines in the Dept. of the Gulf, U. S. A., in 1862-'3. His service was efficiently and faithfully rendered under direction of J. Elliot Smith, military superintendent of telegraphs by appointment of Maj. Gen. B. F. Butler, commanding the department.

Mr. Murray was always loyal and devoted, and his services of great value and benefit to the Government.

FRED. E. SMITH,
Late Quartermaster 8th Vt. Regiment.

Fred. E. Smith, personally known to me as late quartermaster 8th Regt. Vt. Vols., personally appeared and made oath to the above statement by him made and subscribed.

Before me,

[SEAL.]

RALPH B. DENNY, *Notary Public*.

The said Fred. E. Smith further made oath that he was in no manner, either directly or indirectly, interested in or to be benefited by any matter to be effected by this affidavit.

I certify that said Fred. E. Smith is a person upon whose statement full reliance can be placed.

RALPH B. DENNY, *Notary Public*.

MONTPELIER, VT., *January 3, 1893.*

HEADQUARTERS FIRE DEPARTMENT,
New York, December 30, 1892.

I hereby certify that William J. Murray was in the employment of the United States Government in the Department of the Gulf, as constructor of telegraph lines, in 1862-63, during the command of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler in that department, and that said Murray was acting under orders from me in the performance of his duties, by virtue of my appointment to the position of military superintendent of telegraph for the Department of the Gulf, by General Butler, and that said Murray performed the duties of his position intelligently and satisfactorily and to the benefit of the Government during the period of such employment.

J. ELLIOT SMITH,
Qu'r M'r Sergeant, 8th Vt. Vols.,
Asst. Mil. Supt. Telegraph, Dept. of Gulf.

Sworn to before me this 30th day of December, 1892.

[SEAL.]

WM. P. ALLEN, *Notary Public, N. Y. Co.*

This is to certify that Mr. Wm. J. Murry is incurably blind from retinitis apoplectica.

O. J. SHORT, M. D., *Oculist.*

HOT SPRINGS, ARK., *Jan. 26, 1893.*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 27th day of January, 1893. And I further certify that O. J. Short is a regular practicing physician of this city in good professional standing.

[SEAL.]

W. A. KIRK, *Notary Public*.

(My commission expires Ap'l 15th, 1896.)

HOT SPRINGS, ARK., *January 26, 1893.*

I hereby certify that I am personally acquainted with William J. Murray, and have been for the past several years, and have attended him professionally; and I further testify that he is totally blind in both eyes, and has been so during the entire time of my acquaintance with him. He has been blind for twenty years, according to his statement, and I have been told by citizens of this city that he came here 14 years ago totally blind. I further state as my professional judgment that he will never recover his sight.

I further certify that I have no interest in the benefit that may accrue to said Murray.

WM. H. BARRY, M. D.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 27th day January, 1893. And I further certify that W. H. Barry is a regular practicing physician of this city in good professional standing.

[SEAL.]

W. A. KIRK, *Notary Public.*

(My commission expires Ap'l 15th, 1896.)

The Senate bill is therefore reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

In line 9 strike out the words "said pension to be" and insert the words "and pay him a pension."

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